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AND WHICH, BUT WHO.—BROWNING'S OBSCURITY.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—May I jot down for your next issue two thoughts that come to me as I read your February number.

First—and, like the Hebraist, I will begin at the back of the book—I always supposed the rule for *and which, but who*, etc., to be that a relative clause requires the initial conjunction whenever, and only when, another relative clause or its equivalent (an adjective or participial clause) precedes it in the same construction. This rule has always served me, and, I believe, is the key to all doubtful cases.

Secondly, I stand aghast at a remark of President SHEPHERD'S in his BROWNING paper. Conceding BROWNING'S obscurity, Mr. SHEPHERD says, "Yet it is equally true that the poet is not wilfully, or even consciously obscure; the light that is in him is not darkness, though it sometimes lacks brilliance through imperfection in the transmitting medium." But, if the light that is in BROWNING is not darkness, and yet he is obscure, what becomes of BLAIR'S rule that "whatever a man conceives clearly, it is in his power, if he will be at the trouble, . . . to express clearly to others"? Granted that this rule of BLAIR'S says entirely too much, that some things are abstruse except to minds prepared to receive them; still it must be true that the expression, properly sifted, says these things and no others, leaves no doubt at last what was meant. But this is not true of BROWNING. There are things in him that "no fellow can find out." His obscurity may, indeed, be neither wilful nor conscious; but so much the worse for him. Is he like the average Sophomore, with one thing in his mind and another on his paper?

But Mr. SHEPHERD continues—"The noblest types of art, literary or plastic, do not reveal their full measure of rich suggestiveness to the merely casual student; the highest poetry is as much the appropriate subject of patient scrutiny and critical investigation as the science of mathematics or of astronomy. To most of us the high function of 'fathoming

the poet's mind' is not vouchsafed. The 'vision and the faculty divine' may see eye to eye, where we behold dimly and in figure." True, eternally true, indeed; but, unless all our former notions about the office of poet as *seer* are wrong, his duty is to behold what we may not discern, and to reveal all this to us so that we may make it out. He is the high priest of all these mysteries, entering the holy of holies, to be sure, where we may not follow him, but coming out again with a divine message for the people, God's peace and benediction, not a more tangled puzzle than was before us when we knelt humbly at the shrine, seeking light and guidance. This office of seeing and revealing has been the function of every poet since HOMER, every painter since PARRHASIUS, every sculptor since PHEIDON, every musician since JUBAL. Has this been Mr. BROWNING'S office? I trow not.

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Birut IN TATIAN.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—The temptation to connect *birut*, in Tatian cxxxviii, with *bēran* (MOD. LANG. NOTES, vol. v, p. 45) was strong, especially in view of the (superficial) analogy, in sense, between *hefige* and the English *hard*, in the phrase "bear hard." But upon reconsideration, I am constrained to give up the attempt. *Birut* is, I now admit, merely = *estis*, and comes under BRAUNE, § 379.

My remarks upon the verb *bēran* in general, however, may pass, I trust.

J. M. HART.

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BRIEF MENTION.

Messrs. Henry Holt & Co. have just issued a new edition, the sixth, of OTIS' 'Elementary German,' edited by Professor H. S. WHITE of Cornell University. The two parts of the former editions have been incorporated into one volume. The text has been carefully revised, the official orthography has been

adopted throughout, the vocabulary and index extended so as to cover both parts. Otherwise but slight alterations or emendations have been made. The chapter on the pronunciation still needs considerable attention. The mixed vowel should be kept entirely distinct from short *e* and it should be stated that it occurs not only in "an unaccented final syllable" (p. 5) but also in prefixes. There are not two but four varieties of "guttural" *g* (*ch*), two voiced and voiceless, comp. *König* and *Könige*. The wording of some paragraphs is not accurate enough; for example, p. 5, 1: "*b* and *d* are pronounced as in English when initial or when doubled; when final they have the sound of *p* and *t* respectively. Examples: *brechen*, *Stab*, *gehabt*, *habhaft*." Is *b* in *gehabt* final? If so, why not in *behäbig*? Of course the matter is clear enough to the instructor, but the student would be benefitted by more exact definitions. Unless the difference between English *sh* and German *sch* is pointed out, it would be better to teach only the North German pronunciation of *st* and *sp*; an English *sh* in these combinations produces a very undesirable sound. Nothing is said in regard to the pronunciation of initial *ch* and the wording of pp. 11, 14 would lead the student to think that it has the same sound in *Charakter* as in *China*. In many other details the book has been improved by a careful revision. New plates have been cast and the volume presents an attractive appearance. The publishers announce that they will also soon issue an edition printed entirely in German type, which will doubtless increase the popularity of this excellent little book with many teachers who still object to the use of Roman type.

It is becoming a more and more widely recognized principle that instruction in languages should be based from the very beginning upon the reading of connected prose instead of the fragments of sentences and short extracts such as we find in the text-books of former years. If in ordinary prose a certain word, form, or construction, occurs ten times more frequently than another, it is ten times more important that the student should be thoroughly familiar with the former than that he should know the latter. The tendency of

disconnected sentences made up or selected for the purpose of illustrating certain grammatical principles is invariably to change and sometimes even invert that proportion. The remedy is to be found in connected reading-matter selected solely for its general stylistic qualities. The new 'German Reader for Beginners' by Professor E. S. JOYNES (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.) has many desirable features. Compared with the one edited by Professor BRANDT lately noticed in these columns it is perhaps better adapted for younger pupils, as it contains a greater number of short and decidedly easy extracts, most of which are somewhat less modern in thought and style. The first part of the 'Reader' is made up of proverbs and simple fables with interlinear translation of such words as the pupil would not readily recognize, and explanatory foot-notes. The fundamental rules of the syntax are given at the bottom of the page in heavy type. The second part consists of "familiar prose," i. e., fables and a few of GRIMM'S tales; the third part of short and easy poems, the fourth part of narrative prose for rapid reading; the fifth part of letters by HERDER, LESSING, SCHILLER, GOETHE, and VOSS, a number of them in script. There are numerous notes and a good vocabulary; in the latter the etymological cognates are not marked by the type. Unlike Professor BRANDT, Professor JOYNES refers only to his own grammar. On the whole, Professor JOYNES' 'Reader' will be found more serviceable for High-Schools, Professor BRANDT'S for colleges.

As a supplement to Professor JOYNES' 'German Reader,' noticed above, WILHELM JENSEN'S 'Braune Erica,' with notes by the same editor (D. C. Heath & Co., publishers) may be conveniently introduced. In the selections of German readings in his 'Reader' and the 'Braune Erica' for elementary students, Professor JOYNES has happily recognized the importance of carefully graded, and at the same time representative, matter for beginners in the language. The notes are not copious but cover most of the constructions offering serious difficulty. The editor has already anticipated a number of minor suggestions, which might be made here, for the new edition soon to appear.

'French and English: A Comparison,' by PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON (Boston: Roberts Brothers), is a considerable expansion of the series of articles which appeared under the same title in the *Atlantic Monthly* during the years 1886 and 1887. The author long ago established his reputation as a penetrating and sympathetic observer of French manners and customs, in his charming work entitled 'Round my House.' The present essays are of a more general character, discoursing upon a range of topics to do justice to which requires a closely printed index of eighteen pages. As coming from a non-professional yet highly intelligent source, what Mr. HAMERTON has to say on the present condition of modern language study in France and England, is not without interest. One or two passages are here quoted:—

In the present year (1888) the study of modern languages is better established in France than in England. It is obligatory in secondary education. Teachers in the *lycées* are required to be either *bacheliers ès lettres* or to have a corresponding foreign degree, and it is hoped that before long the *licence ès lettres* (equivalent to the English mastership) will be exacted. They have to pass a special linguistic examination for a certificate before they can teach in the *lycées*. This examination is a serious test, but it is much less severe than the competitive trial for the *agrégation*. The certificate gives the rank of a *licencié*, the *agrégation* that of a Fellow of the University. Every year the candidates are of a better class. M. BELJAME says that he knows thirty teachers of English who were already *licenciés*, and amongst the candidates in 1884 twelve had already taken that degree. In short, the teachers of modern languages are now rapidly assuming the same position in the University as the classical masters; and it is only just that they should do so, since they have the same general culture, and their special examinations are more searching. For example, the candidate for the *agrégation* has to lecture twice, before the examiners at the Sorbonne and in public, once in English and once in French (pp. 22-23).

The results of the improved teaching of modern languages have not yet had time to become visible in France. Teachers tell me that amongst their pupils a certain proportion show a natural taste and aptitude, and take heartily to their work. The rest count for nothing, and will retain only a limited vocabulary. In England some knowledge of modern languages is, as yet, much more general, but it seldom reaches the degree of what can be

seriously called "learning." The practical difficulty is that the unripe minds of young students, especially of young ladies, are not ready for the strongest books, and they take no interest in the history and development of a language, so they soon fall back upon the easy and amusing literature of the present, to the neglect of the great authors (pp. 23-24).

We desire to call the attention of our readers to two or three small works on the teaching of phonetics, both special and general. The title of 'Le Français parlé,' by PAUL PASSY, is already familiar to those who are interested in improved methods of presenting the science of French sounds to the non-French learner. The first edition of this useful little book was published in 1886 (Heilbronn; Gebr. Henniger) the second edition appeared last year and is a conscientious reworking of the material previously used, if we except a few short and unimportant pieces that have been cut out to make room for a good extract from the suggestive and instructive address of GASTON PARIS, "Les Parlers de France." The general plan followed by the author is to give the ordinary French script on the page to the left, and facing this the corresponding transcription in phonetic spelling, for which the characters here used vary slightly from the original edition in that the author has adopted the system used by the "Association phonétique des professeurs de langues vivantes," whose head-quarters are in Paris. The results of form and sound which are thus presented in Latin script, with only a few exceptions, belong strictly to the familiar speech, and, from this point of view may perhaps be criticized. Criticism, however, can bear here only on how far an author may go in making vulgar sound-products the subject of practical instruction—and this is a moot point on which scholars will probably never agree—but on the importance of this *kind* of representation, irrespective of individual demands and preferences, there can be no question. Were there no other merit in the treatise before us, the mere fact that in it the different qualities of *o*, *e*, *ai*, *a*, *au*, may be discriminated at a glance, is sufficient recommendation for its careful perusal by English-speaking students, who so often sin in giving these simple phonetic elements. As a matter of fact, however, this is only one of the many excel-

lences of the modest little book which, together with its companion-pieces, 'Phrases de tous les jours' by the lamented FELIX FRANKE, and the 'Fransk Læsebog' by O. JESPERSEN, is to be heartily recommended to instructors of French. Why should not some American teacher give us a like guide, worked out in the light of scientific phonetic method and adapted by its special practical features to our peculiar American needs?

Two small works, differing from the one just mentioned in their general scope, and dealing exclusively with sounds as such, are 'Visible Speech and Vocal Physiology,' 'Speech Reading and Articulation Teaching,' by Professor A. MELVILLE BELL, the father of scientific sound-notation and the veteran promulgator of numerous efforts to place the subject of phonetics upon a rational basis. It would probably not be over-stating the matter to assert that no other one of the master's larger works, not even his 'English Visible Speech for the Million,' will have done better missionary labor in behalf of phonetic reform than these two modest treatises before us, and this for a two-fold reason:—first, because of the greater simplicity of language here used and of the fuller illustration of the subject-matter; and, second'y, because of the lucid treatment of the organic symbols that so often seem enigmatic and bewildering to the ordinary beginner. The object of the first-named work, the author tells us in his preface, "is to popularize a knowledge of Vocal Physiology and Visible Speech and to furnish a text-book by means of which these subjects may be taught in schools and colleges." With this purpose in view, the technical difficulties of his former more scientific treatises have been carefully avoided and the details of the subject presented with a conciseness and accuracy, and with a logical sequence of elemental phenomena that must be both useful and attractive to the uninitiated in phonetic matters. The exercise in vowelizing consonants, to produce the corresponding vowels of the related phonetic series, will doubtless be especially interesting to the learner and teach him to discriminate clearly between consonant and vowel articulation. The second work mentioned above: 'Speech Reading, etc.,' is a model

of clearness and simplicity, without having any of the puzzling symbols that trouble the common mind. It was written at the suggestion of one of the most successful teachers of the Deaf, and, we regret to say, is regarded by the learned author as the last work which he shall write. As to lucid method, what can be clearer than the enunciation here given of the following processes of emission of breath?—

EMISSION takes place:—over back of tongue, German *ch* in *nach*;—over top of tongue, for *y* in *yes*;—over point of tongue, for *r* in *ray*;—between tip of tongue and teeth, for *th*;—over top and point of tongue, simultaneously, for *sh* and *s*;—over sides of tongue, for *l*;—between the lips, for *w*;—between lip and teeth, for *f*;—through the nose, for *m*, *n*, *ng*.

The exercises given here in speech-reading from the lips are especially interesting, and of great importance for the student of phonetics.

A monthly series of comedies, stories and society pieces in French, under the title of 'Edition Berlitz' (New York: Berlitz & Co; Boston: Schoenhof), is especially adapted to the wants of private schools and French clubs. The texts, without notes, for January and February of this year, are respectively: 'Le Retour du Japon,' a one-act comedy by DELACOUR and ERNY, and 'La Gifle' by DREYFUS, likewise in one act. Plays by VERCONSIN, LABICHE and MEILHAC will follow. The selections average thirty pages in length (25 cts. a number; \$2 for the subscription by the year.)

D. C. Heath & Co. have reprinted for use in this country DELBOS' edition of PIRON's 'La Métromanie.' The Introduction on the life and works of the author is supplemented by analyses of each act and by foot-notes. Experience has abundantly shown that all notes should come at the end of a text to prevent as far as possible slipshod ways of preparation (Évo, pp. 175, 40 cts.).

GEORGE SAND's 'La Mare au Diable,' having been set for the examinations of the Normal Colleges in England, is edited by J. F. DAVIS (Hachette & Cie; Boston: Schoenhof). A short Introduction on the life of the author and the original Notice by GEORGE SAND are followed by the text in excellent

type, by abundant and conscientious notes, and by a vocabulary of less merit, (pp. vii, 165; 60 cts).

The same publishers offer from GUIZOT'S 'History of France' the passage relating to the siege of Calais: 'Edouard III et les Bourgeois de Calais,' edited by the Rev. A. C. CLAPIN, M. A., with a map and illustrations. The object of the selection, according to the preface, is to introduce "to the study of ancient French authors," by means of the quotations GUIZOT makes from FROISSART. This somewhat roundabout way may perhaps lead a few wanderers to the truth. The subject is interesting, GUIZOT is entertaining, and the notes are good. 99 pp. 60 cts.

The New York *Home Journal*, an important feature of which is its timely discussion of current literature and art, has assumed a more youthful and attractive garb by folding its four-page "blanket" into eight. The *Journal* was founded nearly half a century ago by GEORGE P. MORRIS and N. P. WILLIS, and on the occasion of the recent change of form the present editor, Mr. MORRIS PHILLIPS, published an illustrated article of reminiscences devoted to these two well-known men of letters.

Scribner's Magazine for November 1889 has, pp. 552-572, "A student of Salamanca," by WILLIAM HENRY BISHOP; *ibidem*, January, we note "The Beauty of Spanish Women" by HENRY T. FINCK; the same magazine for February gives us "A Day in Literary Madrid" by WILLIAM HENRY BISHOP.—*Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* for December, 1889, pp. 821-830, has "The new Troubadours at Avignon" by the same author; *ibidem*, March, is given us "The Brownings in Italy" by ANNE H. WHARTON and "A Hint to Novelists" by W. H. STACKPOLE.—The *Fortnightly Review* for November, pp. 684-694, has "Folk-lore of Northern Portugal," by OSWALD CRAWFORD; *ibidem*, pp. 620-632, we note "Our Dramatists and their Literature," by GEORGE MOORE; *ibidem*, January, is found "Personal Recollections of Thomas Carlyle" by Professor TYNDALL.—The *Deutsche Rundschau* for November, pp. 289-296, contains "Wilhelm GRIMM's Deutsche Heldensage," by REINHOLD STEIG.—La *Nouvelle Revue* for

15th November, pp. 277-292, has an interesting study on the life of "Emile Augier," by LÉOPOLD LACOUR; *ibidem*, 1st November, pp. 102-120, "Les maîtres de Lamartine," by CHARLES ALEXANDRE.—The *Educational Times* (London) for June, August, September, October, and November 1889, January and February 1890, contains a series of six interesting and important lectures on "Language and Linguistic Method in the School," by S. S. LAURIE, Prof. of the Institutes and History of Education in the University of Edinburgh. The subjects treated are as follows: Language as the supreme Instrument of Education; Language as Substance of thought; Language as Substance of Instruction; The Formal or Grammar Discipline; Language as Literature; Method in teaching Foreign Languages. The January (1890) number of this journal has also a suggestive paper by W. H. WIDGERY "Class Teaching of Phonetics as a Preparation for the Pronunciation of Foreign Languages," read before the College of Preceptors, London, ALEXANDER J. ELLIS in the chair.

PERSONAL.

At their meeting on March 4, the Trustees of Rutgers College conferred on Professor T. W. HUNT of Princeton College the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature.—At a recent meeting of the Philadelphia Association of Ministers, Prof. HUNT read a paper on "Emerson as a Writer."

ALONZO WILLIAMS, Prof. of Modern Languages at Brown University, has been appointed supervisor of the Census for Rhode Island.

Professor MELVILLE B. ANDERSON, of the State University of Iowa, has just completed a series of successful public lectures at Davenport, Iowa, on the following subjects in English literature: 1, Aims, Methods, and Value of Literature; 2 and 3, Chaucer; 4, Spenser, 5 and 6, Shakespeare; 7, Bacon; 8, Milton; 9, Wordsworth and Shelley; 10, Robert Browning.

In the announcement of public lectures at Tulane University, New Orleans, we note two lectures by Prof. ALCÉE FORTIER on "The History of Comedy and Tragedy in France;" three lectures by Prof. JOHN R. FICKLEN on "The History of the Early Drama in England" (1, Mysteries and Miracles; 2, Moral Plays; 3, Rise of Romantic Literature); also six lectures by President WM. PRESTON JOHNSON on "SHAKESPEARE" (1, Method of Study of Shakespeare, 2, Macbeth; 3, The Significance of Hamlet; 4 and 5, The Evolution of Hamlet; 6, The Prototype of Hamlet).